

NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION

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NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION CHAIRMAN ELECTED*Members Also Select Vice-Chair and Secretary at Quarterly Meeting*

Sacramento – California's Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) announced today that Highland, Calif., resident James Ramos will serve as NAHC Chairman following his election Dec. 12, 2008. Ramos fills the position held by Bakersfield, Calif., resident William (Bill) Mungary, a Paiute/White Mountain Apache Indian. Mungary served as chairman for 18 years and will stay on as a commissioner.

"James Ramos is going to do a great job of fostering the preservation and protection of Native American cultural and ancestral remains, artifacts and traditions. As a tribal chairman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians, he has had a considerable amount of experience in this regard and we expect his voice to be loud and clear in ensuring that there is widespread respect for our past and that our traditions are carried proudly for future generations," said NAHC Executive Secretary Larry Myers. "I also want to express our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for the long and distinguished service of outgoing Chair Bill Mungary. We are elated that he has agreed to continue with us as a commissioner."

Ramos, a Serrano/Cahuilla Indian, is chairman of the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians. He has served as cultural awareness program coordinator for the tribe, has held various tribal offices and is currently a trustee for the San Bernardino Community College District.

Ramos has also implemented youth leadership programs and taught traditional activities to tribal youth as a way to encourage and continue Native American traditions for future generations.

In his role as NAHC chairman he will oversee efforts to protect and preserve human remains, associated grave goods, cultural resources and will work to encourage the continuance of Native American culture.

Temecula, Calif., resident Laura Miranda, a member of the Pechanga Band of Mission Indians was elected Vice Chairperson. She fills the position vacated by Yucaipa, Calif., resident, Dr. Clifford Trafzer, a Wyandot Indian. As a tribal attorney for the past 10 years, Miranda has devoted a large part of her practice to cultural resources protection.

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Miranda has helped to draft several cultural resources protection laws in the state, including the California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (Steinberg), and SB 18 (Burton), a comprehensive measure that provided fundamental protections for American Indian sacred sites throughout California. Miranda was a key architect of the bill and worked with legislators and opposing groups to build consensus among diverse stakeholders.

She has also been successful in negotiating numerous agreements and settlements on behalf of tribes with local government agencies and land developers leading to protections for cultural resources and Native American human remains.

Ojai, Calif., resident Julie Tumamait-Stenslie was elected NAHC Secretary, filling the position vacated by Fawn Morris, a Yurok Indian from northern California. Tumamait-Stenslie serves as the tribal chair of the Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians, is on the Ojai Valley Museum board of trustees and is also a consultant for Chumash Cultural Services. She is also actively involved in the public school system where she educates students about Native American culture.

“I am very excited to be a part of the commission and am looking forward to working with staff and other commissioners to see that we continue to educate the public and help preserve our sacred sites.”